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ABSTRACT

Results of a national survey of college enrollment trends for fall 1985 are summarized. Based on enrollment figures from more than 70% of U.S. colleges and universities, it was found that overall college and university enrollments continued to hold relatively steady, despite shrinking numbers of high school graduates and 18- to 24-year-olds. College officials attributed the enrollment stability to improvements in academic programs, increased enrollment of graduate students, and stepped-up recruitment of both traditional and nontraditional students. Some officials who reported enrollment declines cited higher tuition as a factor. Additional findings include: full-time enrollment was down 2% overall, but was stable among private institutions; community colleges showed an estimated 4% decrease in full-time enrollment; for public institutions, part-time enrollment increased by 1.7%; overall enrollment of first-time full-time freshmen increased by about 1%, while at four-year public institutions, it increased by 2%; enrollment for first professional degrees dropped by 2%, but graduate enrollment increased by an estimated 3.5%; in all, 27% of institutions reported significant decreases in full-time enrollment; and another 14.8% of institutions reported significantly increased full-time enrollment. (SW)

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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT HOLDS STEADY, SURVEY SHOWS

WASHINGTON, DC (Dec. 5) — Despite shrinking numbers of high school graduates and 18- to 24-year-olds, overall college and university enrollment in the United States continues to hold relatively steady, according to early enrollment figures compiled by the Association Council for Policy Analysis and Research (ACPAR).

Preliminary results of ACPAR's national survey indicate relatively small changes in fall 1985 enrollment in higher education. Total enrollment this fall has dipped 1 percent from last year, contrasted with a 2.6 percent decrease in the number of 18- to 24-year-olds. More than 12 million students were enrolled on U.S. campuses this fall, a figure that has held steady since 1980.

College officials responding to the survey attributed the enrollment stability to improvements in academic programs, increased enrollment of graduate students, and stepped up recruitment of both traditional and nontraditional students. Some officials that reported enrollment declines cited higher tuition as a factor.

This is the third year that ACPAR, a coalition of Washington-based higher education groups conducting research in postsecondary education, has reported its enrollment findings. Because official 1985 enrollment figures will not be available from the National Center for Education Statistics for another year, this early enrollment survey enables colleges and universities to put their own enrollments into national context.

Additional findings include:

o Full-time enrollment was down 2 percent overall, but was stable among independent institutions. Community colleges showed an estimated 4 percent decrease in full-time enrollment.

o Part-time enrollment was stable this year, after having grown steadily in the past few years. However, four-year public institutions increased their part-time enrollment by 1.7 percent.

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o Enrollment of first-time full-time freshmen increased this fall by about 1 percent. Four-year public institutions showed a 2 percent increase in first-time full-time freshmen.

o Enrollment for first professional degrees dropped by 2 percent, but graduate enrollment increased this fall by an estimated 3.5 percent.

o In all, 27 percent of institutions reported significant decreases in full-time enrollment (of 5 percent or more). This contrasts with 1984, when 39 percent of institutions reported significant decreases in their full-time enrollment.

o Another 14.8 percent of institutions reported significantly increased full-time enrollment. Thirty-two percent of institutions reported significant increases in part-time enrollment.

o Four-year public institutions reported a 2 percent decrease in full-time enrollment, along with a 2 percent increase in part-time enrollment; graduate enrollment also increased, by 4.8 percent.

o Public two-year colleges showed a 2 percent decrease in total enrollment. This included a 4 percent drop in full-time students and a 1 percent drop in part-time enrollment.

o Independent institutions, down less than 1 percent overall, reported a slight increase (0.7 percent) in first-time freshmen and in graduate enrollment (0.6 percent), while enrollment for first professional degrees declined by 1.8 percent.

These enrollment figures are based on information from more than 70 percent of the nation's colleges and universities. Associations that gathered data for the survey include the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, and the National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities.

The survey was coordinated by the American Council on Education (ACE), working with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

Additional copies of this announcement, with six tables, are available on request to ACE (Division of Policy Analysis and Research, One Dupont Circle, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036). Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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Table 1

Changes in Fall Enrollment, 1984 to 1985
by Attendance Status of Students

	Total Headcount	Full-Time	Part-Time	FTE
All Institutions	-1.0%	-1.8%	+0.1%	-1.5%
Public	-1.0	-2.3	+0.6	-1.8
Four-Year	- .8	-1.9	+1.7	-1.4
Two-Year	-2.0	-4.2	-0.8	-3.0
Independent	-0.8	-0.1	-2.3	-0.4

Table 2

Changes in Fall Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen
1984 to 1985

	All First-time Freshmen	Full-time First-time Freshmen	Part-time First-time Freshmen	FTE Freshmen
All Institutions	+0.5%	+1.4%	-1.6%	+1.2%
Public	+0.4	1.9	-2.3	+1.2
Four-Year	+1.6	+2.3	-5.0	+2.0
Two-Year	-0.6	+0.7	-1.6	0.0
Independent	+0.7	+0.1	+6.0	+0.3

Source: Association Council for Policy Analysis and Research, Early Fall Enrollment Survey.

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Table 3

Changes in Fall Enrollment (Headcount)
1984 to 1985, by Level of Attendance

	Under-graduates	Graduates	First Professional
All Institutions	-0.8%	+3.5%	-2.0%
Public	-1.1	+4.8	-2.2
Four-year	-0.2	+4.8	-2.2
Two-year	-3.4	N/A	N/A
Independent	+0.2	+0.6	-1.8

Source: Association Council for Policy Analysis and Research, Early Fall Enrollment Survey.

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Table 4

Changes in Enrollment of First-time Freshmen,
1984 to 1985, by Region

	Full-time First-time Freshmen	FTE Freshmen
New England	+2.7%	+2.8%
Mideast	+3.6	+3.6
Great Lakes	+2.3	+2.6
Plains	-3.1	-2.7
Southeast	+4.3	+3.6
Southwest	-2.4	-3.3
Rocky Mountains	-5.0	-4.0
Far West	-2.8	-1.0

Source: Association Council for Policy Analysis and Research, Early Fall Enrollment Survey.
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States in Each Regional Category

New England	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
Mid East	Delaware, District of Columbian, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
Great Lakes	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
Plains	Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
Southeast	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Southwest	Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Rocky Mountains	Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming
Far West	Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington

Table 5

Percentage of Institutions with Increased or Decreased Enrollment, 1984 to 1985

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Percent of Institutions with Increased Enrollment of 5 Percent or More		
All Institutions	14.8	32.0
Public		
Four-year	9.3	32.2
Two-year	13.6	25.8
Independent	17.8	35.4
Percent of Institutions with Decreased Enrollment of 5 Percent or More		
All Institutions	27.0	29.1
Public		
Four-year	18.6	21.1
Two-year	40.0	28.5
Independent	23.5	33.0

Source: Association Council for Policy Analysis and Research, Early Fall Enrollment Survey.

Table 6

Percentage of Institutions with Increased
or Decreased Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen, 1984 to 1985

	Full-time	Part-time
Percent of Institutions with Increased Enrollment of 5 percent or more		
All Institutions	27.5	38.2
Public		
Four-Year	29.9	34.5
Two-Year	18.2	26.7
Independent	31.6	46.2
Percent of Institutions with Decreased Enrollment of 5 percent or more		
All Institutions	36.2	39.0
Public		
Four-Year	31.8	41.2
Two-Year	32.7	25.8
Independent	40.1	45.4

Source: Association Council for Policy Analysis and Research, Early Fall Enrollment Survey.

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